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youths may have an opportunity to kiss unsuspecting maidens. To be in keeping with old custom, the mistletoe must be fastened to a wheel suspended from the ceiling. The wheel looks well hung by garlands of holly leaves sewed to dark colored tape, or if there is a chandelier in the room it may be hung from and directly beneath it. Garlands and festoons of green are arranged around the walls of the room in any way which the taste of the worker suggests, but sameness should be avoided as far as possible. The wheel and mistletoe should be used only in the one place, and the wheel should not appear in any place except the parlor and the hall window.

All kinds of green should be used in abundance, but nothing should be employed for color save natural berries, homemade berries, and the shields and banners, except that a few bunches of bright ribbon are also allowable. Artificial flowers should not be used, and even fresh blossoms from the green-house are relegated to the flower bowls on the tables.

L. A. FRANCE.

#### PAINTING ON LINCRUSTA.

THAT valuable product of modern ingenuity known as lincrusta—or Lincrusta-Walton, as it is generally called in England, in honor of its inventor—has become a wonderfully popular material for decoration by amateurs. That it is cheap and indestructible, and painting on it in its simpler methods produces attractive results without calling for special art training, doubtless has much to do with the matter. While, as our readers know, we deprecate the practice of imitating one material in another, it is impossible to regard without astonishment the cleverness of some of the copies in lincrusta of ceramic and metallic art objects to be seen in places where artists' materials are sold. The effect of majolica is produced as follows: For a first coat: "Use tube colors, ground in japan, equal parts of flake and zinc whites, thoroughly mixed with Damar varnish. Apply to the surface of the lincrusta two coats of this preparation. When perfectly dry, proceed with the colors desired." For the second coat: "Use tube colors, ground in japan, mixed thoroughly with Damar varnish only. The varnish should be used thin enough to allow the color to flow freely into deep places. To finish the decoration, when perfectly dry apply two heavy coats of Damar or white spirit varnish. Damar varnish, if too heavy to flow freely, should be thinned with turpentine, but alcohol should be used in thinning the white spirit varnish. Lincrusta being a non-absorbent material, but little preparation is necessary before gilding, but a coating of brown dryer or shellac varnish economizes the bronzing powder and enhances its effect. When a burnished surface is desired, the surface is prepared by the application of three or four coats of the ordinary burnish size."

Madame Le Prince gives the following suggestions for producing metallic effects on lincrusta: For oxidized silver: "Cover in silver leaf, or, if preferred, in one or both silver bronzes. Glaze the silvered surface with white shellac varnish; when dry, rub a brush well charged with dark blue gray oil color into all interstices of the ornament in relief, as well as upon the background, leaving the color thickest upon those portions of background more immediately surrounding the raised ornament; now remove the color from highest points by rubbing with a soft cloth tightly folded, and pass a clean brush over those parts in lower relief that require to be left in half tone. Duller yet more artistic effects are produced by using 'dry color' in powder for the deepest shades. It is of importance that these colors lie thickest on those parts of the design thrown most into shade, and, as in natural oxidation, the flat surface forming background should have fewer and more subdued lights than the more prominent parts of raised ornament. A careful study of some piece of silver oxidized by nature will help the student more than many words, and every little grace of burnished light and softened shadow noted on the true chasing and transferred to work in hand will give to it further beauty. For a fairly permanent bright green bronze, paint over a first coating of brown dryer a second of copper bronze in powder, mixed with bronzing liquid; dry thoroughly. Over this draw a brush laden with green bronze powder, also mixed with bronzing liquid; clear all high lights

by rubbing with a soft cloth, allowing tiny patches of the copper to show through on background also. Dry well, and heighten the effect by drawing a brush containing pale gold bronze, damped with bronzing liquid, and held horizontally, rapidly backward and forward, catching lightly the prominences. When dry, coat once or twice in white glazing varnish. This again may be toned, where more subdued effect is desired, by a thin wash of terre verte (oil color), thinned with boiled linseed oil, and more rubbing with a soft cloth, to bring out or keep under the various portions of relief. For Florentine bronzes copper and varied shades of gold bronzing powders are used, with Vandyck for shades. For 'antique' bronzes, use the same list of material as for 'bright green bronze,' laying first a ground of green oil paint to obtain depth in shade. When lights have been 'picked out' in colored bronzes, rub a little beeswax, softened by turpentine to a thin paste, and mixed with a very little of the brown dryer, into the deepest shadows of your panel, and a few moments later pass over them a brush laden with Paris green in fine dry powder."

The page of designs opposite gives a fair idea of the artistic excellence of the objects Messrs. Fr. Beck & Co. are making in lincrusta for decoration by amateurs.

### Notes on Decoration.

THE chief weakness of American architectural decoration is that it almost invariably fails to achieve the first purpose of all decoration—appropriateness. We note this fact on every hand—in our churches, like St. Paul's with its abominable coloring, and Trinity with its reredos so puny in detail that its design can scarcely be seen from the altar rail; in our theatres, which, from the Metropolitan Opera House down, present no instance of congruous interior embellishment; in our hotels and private houses. All decoration to be just must be in proportion as well as in keeping with the structure it decorates. In a church of the size of Trinity, for instance, the details should be calculated upon the same scale throughout. Such an addition as the reredos is lost, because its proportions are dwarfed by its surroundings. The Asa Packer reredos in St. Mark's church, at Mauch Chunk, which is placed in an edifice only a third as large as Trinity, is calculated on a larger scale than the Astor reredos, and has a far finer effect, because it is in proportion to the place of which it is a part. The rule applies to flat decoration as well. In vast and lofty spaces broad and simple masses are required. Puny detail, no matter how beautiful in itself, is not only lost in such application, but aids by its diminutiveness in confusing and belittling the general effect. Disconnected and inappropriate detail produces the same result. To put it in the briefest terms: The properly decorated, like the properly built, house has all of its decoration considered in relation to its uses. No one dreams of decorating his dining-room like a church or his library like a ball room. But in the minor details far greater barbarisms are perpetrated, for styles of architecture are fused and confused into grotesque nondescripts, and shreds and patches of decoration from entirely opposite sources are combined to form one preposterous whole. In some cases a sort of superficial harmony is produced by the relation of colors, but the effect is only superficial. The moment investigation begins, the errors become grievously manifest to any observer with a sensitive appreciation of the right and wrong in decoration.

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WHEN a decorative or architectural work of magnitude is contemplated in any other country but ours, the designs are carefully fitted to the purpose of the work from the start. Appropriateness is the first consideration. The execution of the work proceeds in all of its details with this one point in view. A jail is not built on the same plan as a palace or a private mansion on that of a public building. Nor is the work permitted to rest at the discretion of a dozen different architects, decorators and contractors. The supervising or consulting architect is the directing power of the machinery of creation. It is his judgment which reduces the fragments of the work to a homogeneous whole. His taste prevents the contradic-

tions which occur when many men work in patches upon the same task. He permits no sacrifice of appropriateness to mere prettiness any more than to the gratification of a personal whim. In this country, on the contrary, the painters and carvers, the metal and glass workers, the upholsterers and furniture builders and so on, all work at their own sweet wills, without relation to one another, often in senseless rivalry. Each may do his best, but he contributes only to a general confusion, so that the result instead of being perfect in the aggregate is invariably the reverse.

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WHEN we speak of the sums of money spent on the decoration of such interiors as that of the Hoffman House, we should rather speak of them as being wasted. Indeed, they are worse than wasted, for they are not only not represented by the results, but such results as there are tend to pervert the taste and perpetuate in other spots the errors which invest this one with sumptuous absurdity. Such decoration as that at the Hoffman House is not even barbarically magnificent, for barbarous decoration has a pervading symmetry, however unusual or exaggerated its composite effect may be. Here, in a house devoted to the purpose of rest and refreshment, the very portal is embellished with trophies of war. In the café the beautiful and the hideous, the extravagantly expensive and the vulgarly cheap, jostle one another on every hand. The newly completed portion of the building is the same so that the whole hotel is a sort of architectural and decorative Madame Tussaud's, crowded with a variety which the thoughtless or ignorant find curious and interesting but which is indescribably vulgar to all who are capable of forming an accurate judgment. Yet there are in England dozens of hotels and public restaurants and resorts like this which, at a far less expenditure, have been made monuments of appropriateness and good taste. I can cite the Grosvenor Hotel, in Chester, for one—perhaps the Criterion restaurant in London for another. The enormous advertising the Hoffman House has received has made its splendors familiar by report throughout the country. It is a place of call for strangers who have read of it, and these visitors being, as a rule, of the sort which does not discriminate, they carry away with them impressions which are absolutely false. The pernicious results of a bad example are well known. Such an example as this is probably responsible for more outrages on true decoration in this country than any other that we are afflicted with.

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THE only large theatre we have ever had in this country which came any way near true symmetry of decoration and architecture was Booth's. It was a noble house. It looked like a theatre, without and within. It had the entrances which belong to a great playhouse, and the massive and not extravagantly ornate architecture which its use called for. The original decorations of the interior were by an Italian painter and except for an over-conscientious abundance of small detail which was wasted on the ceiling, they were admirably conceived and executed. The decoration of the Madison Square Theatre is, in a general sense, well carried out as far as its interior is concerned. But the artistic harmony of its decoration is destroyed by the contradiction of the details. That theatre could be given a superb grace and lightness by simply gilding the walls from a dado of velvet. The gold should be applied in one uniform flat, and variety could be given by toning it with bitumen from the base up, so that the mass of light would be concentrated overhead. The expense of this decoration would be an unimportant item, for the gold once applied would, if the best leaf were used, last as long as the wall itself. Any breaks in the wall could be patched. The only renewals necessary would be in the dado when wear and tear demanded it.

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IN view of the fact that Trinity and Grace churches are to be re-decorated internally, it will be interesting to see how far they will verify these observations. The re-decoration is in both cases, I believe, in the hands of a committee of the church, by whom all contracts will be awarded. As far as I know not a member of either committee is an architect or even a man of any known judgment in architectural and artistic matters. Yet the picturesque fate of the churches is given over to them as absolutely as if it were a mere case of painting a fence. ARCHITECT.